

**Belmont Human Rights Commission
Belmont Town Hall
April 2, 2009**

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Lisa Bernt, Nan Donald, Connie Williams, Fran Yuan
Members Absent: Janet Cudmore-Boswell, Judie Feins, Rosalind Kabrhel
Liaisons Present: Captain Peter Hoerr (Belmont Police Department)

The meeting began at 7:15 pm

1. Lisa Bernt presided, and Fran Yuan took the minutes. A quorum was present.
2. The March minutes were accepted as amended.
- Fran reported one call to the HRC phone line from a previous caller. She said she would send members a copy of our incident and phone line record forms. She also mentioned having our phone number placed in the phone book and would look into this. She will continue to answer the phone line.
4. Nan mentioned the Metro Boston Recovery Learning Community, which offers support to people with mental health issues.
5. Lisa reported on her attendance at the Selectmen's meeting, at which recommendations for changes to the HRC's charge were approved. The HRC will no longer be charged with investigating allegations of discrimination. The item,

"Receive and investigate allegations of discrimination against individuals...." was dropped and changed to:

"Receive allegations of violations of human rights laws and related legislation, and refer matters to relevant Town, State, and Federal authorities for disposition of matters within their respective jurisdictions."

The number of members was decreased from 11 to 9. As a result, there are currently two openings on the HRC. Lisa was also reappointed to the HRC. There is apparently no minimum age for serving as a member of the commission.

6. Fran reported putting a short announcement in the Belmont Citizen Herald, an email to Alice Melnikoff at the high school, and emails to Belmont Against Racism members, seeking new commission members.

3 Connie reported that the Archiving Project is underway. Anne Goldenberg will be meeting with the interested Belmont High School students.

3 Lisa reported she intends to share the Housing Resource Book she has put together with the Mass. Assoc. of Human Rights Commissions but has had trouble scanning it. She will continue to pursue this.

- A discussion about having the Mass. Assoc. Against Discrimination (MCAD) make a presentation during Diversity Week at the high school next year was initiated. Lisa will speak to Laura Jean and Dan Richards at BHS about this.
- Lisa reported on a breakfast she went to at which MCAD made a presentation. They are possibly losing some funding.
- The Freedom to Marry Ice Cream Social will be on Sunday, May 17th from 4-6 pm.
 - Town Day will be on Saturday, May 16th. We will be sharing a table with Belmont against Racism from 10 am- 3 pm. Fran and Nan said they could be at the table for 2 hours. Connie and Lisa were not yet sure about their attendance. New brochures will be needed as the charge has changed. The website also needs to be changed. Discussed having lollipops at the table with information about the HRC on them.
 - Fran brought up a bill, An Act to Improve Juvenile Justice Data Collection (Senate No. 940), forwarded to her by Kathryn Bonfiglio of Belmont against Racism. The bill would require all agencies involved in juvenile justice to report non-identifiable statistical information about juveniles with whom they have contact: age, gender, race/ethnicity, and charging offense.

Lisa stated that she supports the collecting of data but would not take a positive on a specific bill. Consensus was that we should not support the bill as a group because we don't have enough background information about competing or better bills, and hadn't seen the wording of the actual bill. We could support it as individuals but we don't have the time or expertise to review it at this time.

- At the May meeting, we agreed to discuss Town Day in more detail and any possible new members. Lisa also wants input about what kind of data about Belmont we want from the MCAD. She can put in a public records request for the kind of data we want: housing complaints (which years?) and employment complaints, which are more difficult to pin down. Lisa can also research if decisions were made in each case. She said that most complaints get settled and don't go through the whole process.
- Liaison's Report: Captain Hoerr updated the commission on a situation he brought up in March. He felt it had less to do with race than other legal issues.
- Nan brought up the violent crime in Milton this week that involved a brother killing his two sisters. She was concerned there would be a backlash of stigma towards the mentally ill as a result of this case. She reported that in the absence of alcohol, the mentally ill tend more often to be the victim, not the perpetrator of violence.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.